Message

From: Labbe, Ken [Labbe.Ken@epa.gov]
Sent: 8/19/2020 9:08:04 PM
To: AO OPA OMR CLIPS [AO_OPA_OMR_CLIPS@epa.gov]
Subject: Daily Clips (afternoon edition) August 19, 2020

Daily News Clips August 19, 2020 (afternoon edition)

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The Trump Administration has removed environmental regulations that hamstring American businesses | Opinion
https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2020/08/the-trump-administration-has-removed-environmental-regulations-that-hamstring-american-businesses-opinion.html
By Andrew Wheeler
Environmental protection and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand. Overregulation hamstrings American businesses that want to do more to protect their workers and the environment. Businesses across America have recognized this for many years, and under the Trump Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is shifting our regulatory approach to incentivize businesses to invest in job-creating projects and innovative technology.

Removing duplicative regulations saves employers billions of dollars in unnecessary compliance costs each year, while maintaining important health and environmental protections. During the previous administration, America's oil and natural gas industry was weighted down by overregulation. Today, EPA is correcting course and finalizing a set of rules that will help ensure an important component of our domestic fuel supply stays in the pipeline – and out of our atmosphere.

Early in his administration, President Trump directed agencies to review existing regulations that potentially "burden the development or use of domestically produced energy resources" by issuing Executive Order 13783, Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth. After a robust process and consideration of public comments, EPA is removing unnecessary and inappropriate burdens on the United States energy sector with two final rules that amend the 2016 New Source Performance Standards for the oil and natural gas industry.

and the industry has an incentive to minimize leaks and maximize its use. Since 1990, U.S. natural gas production has increased by 89% according to the U.S. Department of Energy, and over the same period, methane emissions across

the natural gas industry have fallen by 24%. Our regulations should not stifle this innovation and progress. Redundant, top-down mandates from Washington do not work. Far too often, we have seen standards promulgated that are unattainable with even the best available technology, resulting in job losses and costly legal challenges. EPA's amendments instead foster regulatory certainty by modernizing, simplifying, and streamlining regulations that impact the domestic oil and gas industry, while protecting the environment.

The first rule removes the transmission and storage segment of the industry from regulation and rescinds the Obama Administration's inadequately justified regulation of methane. The rule's amendments also reflect the legal requirement that EPA must find that a pollutant, like methane, contributes significantly to air pollution anticipated to endanger public health before regulating it. These amendments not only follow the text and spirit of the Clean Air Act, but also reduce regulatory burden to the industry and streamline other requirements. EPA is maintaining its existing regulations that control smog-forming volatile organic compounds from the production and processing segments of the industry, continuing the protection of human health and the environment, while also reducing methane emissions.

The second rule will make much-needed changes to requirements for monitoring fugitive emissions (or "leaks"), among other changes. The technical amendments are commonsense changes that will relieve an unnecessary burden on small oil and gas operators who rely on straightforward regulatory policy to run their businesses and provide Americans with reliable, affordable energy.

We recognize that some states are already controlling fugitive emissions under their own regulations. Our amendments relieve some owners and operators from complying with multiple layers of regulation.

Combined, the two final rules are estimated to yield about $100 million a year in net benefits to the United States economy – money that can be reinvested in innovative technology that is good for business, people, and the environment.

While other nations talk about reducing emissions, the United States is actually making progress. And we're doing it thanks to market forces and private sector innovations. The United States is a global leader when it comes to clean air and greenhouse gases reductions. For example, from 2005 to 2018, total U.S. energy-related carbon dioxide emissions fell by 12%, while the United States became the number one energy producer in the world. Our air quality has also improved. From 1970 to 2019, combined emissions of criteria air pollutants and their precursors fell by 77% while the economy grew 285%. This success has continued during the Trump Administration with a 7% reduction from 2017 to 2019.

EPA is committed to providing the regulatory certainty needed to continue America's energy dominance and our nation's environmental progress. To date, EPA has finalized an estimated 64 deregulatory actions, saving an estimated $94 billion in regulatory costs, with an additional 39 actions in development projected to save billions of dollars more. EPA has also exceeded President Trump's two-for-one deregulatory goal, completing five cost-saving deregulatory actions for every one regulation implemented.

EPA will continue to look for the most cost-effective approaches to achieve its mission to protect human health and the environment. The new standards for the oil and gas industry contain just a few of the many commonsense actions that the administration is taking to support domestic energy production and American jobs. By rightsizing regulations, EPA is providing the flexibility that businesses need to invest in innovations that will continue to benefit the economy and the environment far into the future.

EPA, Boy Scouts announce collaboration on special awards
https://www.atchisonglobenow.com/community_and_lifestyles/epa-boy-scouts-announce-collaboration-on-special-awards/article_14fc6978-e239-11ea-864a-5bf584092270.html

- Atchison Globe

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NEWS RELEASE
WWW.EPA.GOV/NEWSROOM

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler and Boy Scouts of America (BSA) CEO and President Roger C. Mosby signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on the creation of an EPA/BSA special award to be awarded as part of a new environmental education awards and recognition program.

"I was an Eagle Scout growing up in Ohio, and I can definitely say scouting is where I learned to love the environment," said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. "This award program challenges Scouts to earn multiple environment-related merit badges in the areas of animal study, outdoor activity, Earth science, and Public Health, and increases awareness of EPA's accomplishments during its first 50 years."

"Since the very beginning of the Boy Scouts of America, conservation and environmental studies have been an integral part of our program. Scouts have provided service to their communities and to our country by helping to conserve wildlife, energy, forests, soil and water," said Boy Scouts of America President and CEO Roger C. Mosby. "We are proud to sign the first-ever Memorandum of Understanding with the Environmental Protection Agency so that we can continue to challenge and empower Scouts to learn more about and care for the world around them."

"For 110 years, the Boy Scouts of America have used the outdoors as a classroom to educate youth and adults on the importance of being good stewards of our natural resources. This partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency will have a positive impact on thousands of youth and our environment," said Boy Scouts of America National Capital Area Council Scout Executive & CEO Craig Poland.

Aligned with EPA's 50th Anniversary Commemoration, the program includes several activities that help to fulfill EPA's obligations under the 1990 National Environmental Education Act to promote environmental education and to provide national leadership to increase environmental literacy.

The EPA-sponsored award will challenge Scouts to learn about, explore, and conserve the world around them as part of an awareness campaign to educate the public about EPA's accomplishment during its first 50 years and develop the vision for the next 50 years. The program will also provide EPA with opportunities to educate BSA member councils and leadership about priority initiatives including Trash Free Waters, Winning on Reducing Food Waste, and Healthy Schools.

The program will introduce Scouts to the breadth of EPA's involvement in environmental protection and conservation, combining a variety of disciplines including earth sciences, animal studies, outdoor activities, and public health. To receive the EPA award, Scouts must first receive merit badges in each of these four areas and participate in an

environmental/public health community service project, totaling at least six hours, as part of an approved Scouting program. Scouts may complete required steps to earn the award between April 22, 2020 and December 31, 2021, at which time the MOU may be extended.

The Boy Scouts of America is the largest Scouting organization and one of the largest youth organizations in the United States, with about 2.1 million youth participants and about 1 million adult volunteers. The BSA was founded in 1910, and since then, about 110 million Americans have participated in BSA programs.

EPA approves Virginia plan to improve water quality
https://www.waterworld.com/drinking-water/infrastructure-funding/press-release/14181944/epa-approves-virginia-plan-to-improve-water-quality
Plan for $659 million in water infrastructure improvements for Fiscal Year 2020 that includes $32.5 million in EPA funding.
Aug 19th, 2020

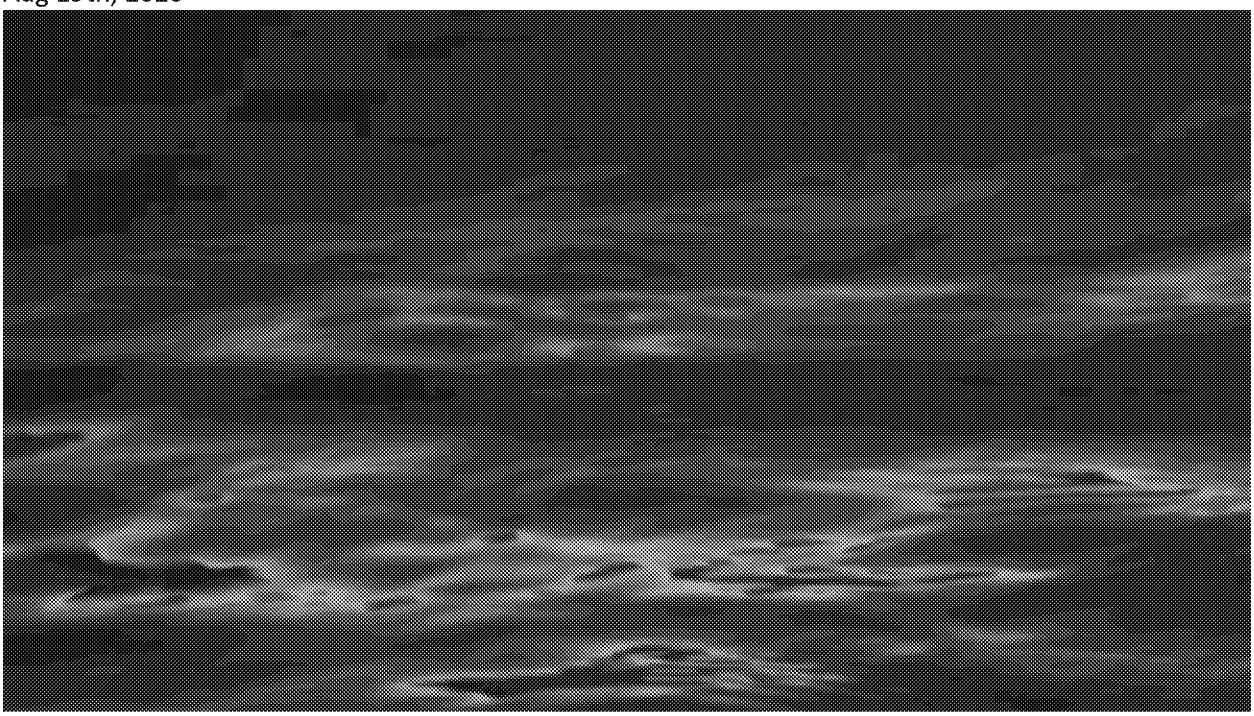


Photo by Tim Mossholder from Pexels

PHILADELPHIA -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today announced it has approved Virginia's plan for $659 million in water infrastructure improvements for Fiscal Year 2020 that includes $32.5 million in EPA funding.

Funds will provide low interest loans to communities for about 25 projects statewide including construction of stormwater and wastewater treatment facilities and other projects vital to protecting and improving water quality in rivers, lakes and streams for drinking water, recreation and natural habitat.

Altogether, the funding includes the $32,521,000 grant from EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), $6.5 million state matching funds, repayments from prior CWSRF loans, and interest earnings.

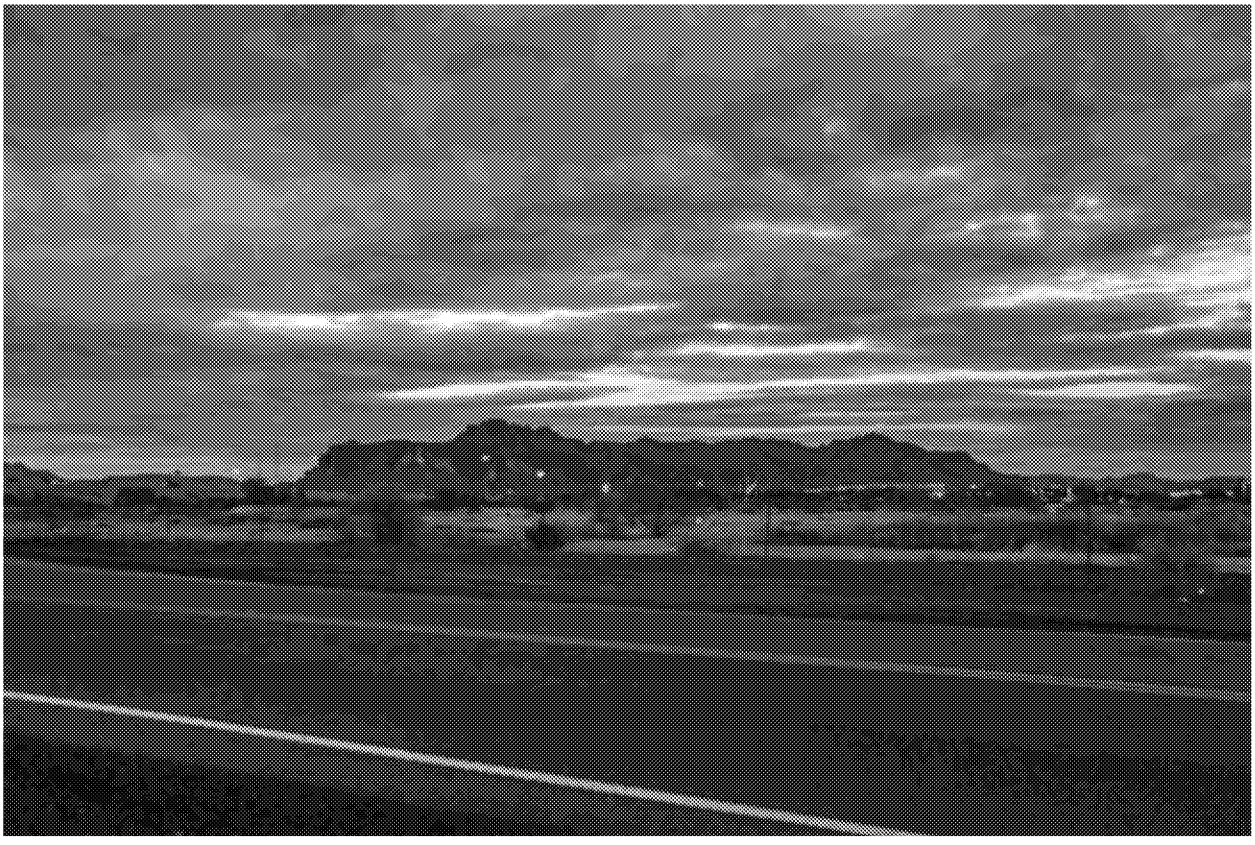
"The revolving fund program is essential to providing all Americans the clean and safe water they deserve," said EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio. "EPA is proud to support Virginia's plan and remains committed to helping communities with infrastructure improvements that protect their water resources"

Some of the projects targeted for funding include:

- $179 million to the Hampton Roads Sanitation District to upgrade sewer lines and equipment at wastewater treatment plants to support an innovative Sustainable Water Infrastructure for Tomorrow (SWIFT) system that takes highly-treated water that would otherwise be discharged into the Elizabeth, James or York rivers and puts it through additional advanced water treatment to meet drinking water quality standards.
- $9 million to the City of Norfolk for multiple projects including replacement of sewer infrastructure and related operating equipment.
- $719,937 to the Wise County Public Service Authority for extension of the sewer system to include the community of Glamorgan, Wise County, Virginia.
- $10.9 million to the Town of Richlands, Tazewell County, Virginia, to rehabilitate and upgrade its 4.0 MGD wastewater treatment plant.
- $27.8 million to the Upper Occoquan Service Authority to upgrade the Millard H. Robbins, Jr., water reclamation facility with ozone and new electrical work and piping.
- $12 million to the City of Norfolk for construction of four shoreline sites around Norfolk, the design and build of two stormwater wetlands and other improvements to better control stormwater runoff.

- **EPA Proposal Moves Maine Closer To Water Quality Criteria Compromise**
- https://insideepa.com/daily-news/epa-proposal-moves-maine-closer-water-quality-criteria-compromise
- August 19, 2020
- EPA is proposing to withdraw Obama-era water quality criteria for Maine and allow the state to implement carefully negotiated compromise toxics criteria, following years of litigation that drew national attention over concerns that efforts to protect the health of sustenance fishers would lead to unlawfully stringent water discharge permit limits in other states.
-
- The agency in its recently signed proposal says it taking this action because Maine has adopted, and EPA has approved, human health criteria (HHC) for toxic pollutants "that the Agency determined are protective of the designated uses for these waters." "The withdrawal of existing federal criteria would enable Maine to implement those EPA-approved human health criteria," the agency says in a fact sheet accompanying the proposal.
-
- EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler signed the proposal Aug.13, and it will appear soon in the *Federal Register*, starting a 45-day public comment period. The agency also plans to hold two online public hearings on the proposal, one on Sept. 30 and one on Oct. 1. During the Obama administration, EPA and Maine officials clashed over how best to protect sustenance fishing designated uses in Indian waters, with the agency in 2015 rejecting some of the state's water quality criteria and promulgating federal criteria for the state at the end of 2016.
-
- Maine sued EPA in 2015 over the agency's rejection, and the litigation moved slowly for the next several years, including being put on hold while the Trump administration reviewed the Obama EPA's decision.
- The Trump administration decided at the end of 2017 that it would not withdraw or change any of the decisions challenged in the case. But in 2018, the agency changed its position and asked a federal district court to remand the issue to the agency for reconsideration rather than defend its decision.
-
- Judge Jon D. Levy of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine granted EPA's request at the end of 2018 for a remand but rejected the agency's push, backed by industry and municipal groups, to vacate the 2015 rejection of water quality criteria, saying it would allow for the repeal of a rule without public notice and comment and without judicial consideration of the merits. Following negotiations among Native American tribes, EPA and state officials, state lawmakers developed legislation to create a new sustenance fishing designated use and direct state regulators to develop strict new water quality standards to protect waterbodies with that use. Maine Gov. Janet Mills (D) signed the bill into law in June 2019.
-

- The HHC that the Obama administration rejected were based on a fish consumption rate of 32.4 grams per day (g/day) of fish. The 2016 federal rule used a fish consumption rate of 286 g/day. The new state HHC that EPA approved June 23 use a fish consumption rate of 200 g/day, which is lower than the Obama administration used but still higher than EPA's national guidelines, which consider a rate of 142 grams per day to be protective of sustenance fishing, and rates of 175 grams per day adopted in Oregon and Washington, which also took Native American fish consumption into account.

- Following EPA's approval of Maine's new criteria, all the parties to the long-running litigation, *Maine v. Wheeler*, July 31 filed a stipulation of dismissal voluntarily dismissing without prejudice the remaining pending claims in the case.
  - Gasoline-dispensing, surface-coating rules sent to EPA
  - https://www.yourvalley.net/apache-junction-independent/stories/gasoline-dispensing-surface-coating-rules-sent-to-epa,180894
  - 
  - ARIANNA GRAINEY
  - **Apache Junction is the only area in Pinal County in a Phoenix-metro 2008 ozone non-attainment area. An area designated attainment is meeting a standard while non-attainment means not meeting the ozone standard, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.**
  - Posted Tuesday, August 18, 2020 1:50 pm
  - **WHAT ARE VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS?**
  - Car exhaust, gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment, gasoline dispensing stations, industrial-coating operations, printing shops, paints, and household chemicals are some of the sources of volatile organic compounds.
  - Volatile organic compounds react with nitrogen oxides on hot summer days to form ozone --- smog.
  - There are thousands of individual chemical species of volatile organic compounds that can react to form ozone.
  - Source: EPA
  - **WHY IS OZONE A CONCERN?**
  - Ground-level ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but is created by chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight.

- Ozone-related adverse health effects range from decreased lung function and increased respiratory symptoms to serious indicators of respiratory morbidity including emergency department visits and hospital admissions from respiratory causes and possibly cardiovascular-related morbidity.
- Source: Pinal County
-  **By** Richard Dyer
  Twitter: @RHDyer
- Revisions to surface-coating and gasoline-dispensing rules in Apache Junction are being sent to the EPA for review.
- The Pinal County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously recently to approve a resolution on proposed changes pertaining to air-quality rules that limit emissions of volatile organic compounds.
- Apache Junction is the only area in Pinal County in a Phoenix-metro 2008 ozone non-attainment area. An area designated attainment is meeting a standard while non-attainment means not meeting the ozone standard, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.
- The changes are being submitted to the EPA through the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality as elements of an Arizona state implementation plan, according to county documents.
- "Specifically those rules apply to... metal surface coatings --- certain paints; and gasoline-dispensing facilities, of which there are about 20 in that area. The surface-coating rule right now only applies to one company and if they make the changes that they have suggested to us they are planning, they won't be subject to the rule either," Mike Sundblom, director of Pinal County Air Quality Control, said to the supervisors.
- "So, it's just these improvements to gasoline dispensing and the result is you have less. When you pump gas, you can smell gasoline sometimes; when they load gasoline into the tanks, sometimes the vapors get out. These rules minimize those in order to help control ozone," he said.
- The EPA had asked the county to include language that requires gasoline dispensing be discontinued immediately when any liquid leaks, visible vapors or significant odors are observed and not be resumed until the observed issue is repaired, according to a Pinal County notice of final rulemaking.
- Cutback asphalt
- County officials also made some modifications to a negative declaration document, seeking to remove rules for cutback asphalt, Mr. Sundblom said.
- "We have to look at this wide variety of potential sources and if we don't have those sources or they're too small --- they meet certain criteria --- we do what is called a negative declaration and we say we don't have to make rules for those because they are too small or they don't exist," he said.
- "For example, we had to go through and make a negative declaration for what's called cutback asphalt, which public works and paving companies haven't used for years, but we still had to say there's that," he said.
- A cutback asphalt is an asphalt cement that has been liquefied by blending it with a petroleum solvent. The solvents are volatile organic compounds, precursors to ozone formation in the atmosphere, according to the EPA.
- The City of Apache Junction and Pinal County public works departments don't use cutback asphalt, officials said.
- "Our quantities of asphalt materials used on average would take me some considerable time to quantify; however, we have not used any cutback asphalts for several years now and the asphalt treatments that may

contain cutbacks we no longer have in our 'toolbox' inventory of choices," Apache Junction Public Works Manager Shane Kiesow said in an email to Pinal County.

- "So I think, to answer your question, I'm confident our use will be 0% use of cutbacks of the total asphalt we use in future thus probably allowing you to make the negative declaration," he said.
- Pinal County officials echoed a similar sentiment.
- "We haven't utilized cutbacks for several years. Our current asphaltic materials either utilize a chemical additive or are an emulsion to assist with breaking of the asphalt. At this time we don't anticipate going back to cutbacks," Pinal County Public Works Manager Joe Ortiz said in an e-mail to the county.
- To determine that there are no operating facilities in the Pinal County portion of the ozone non-attainment area that fall under a category other than surface coatings and gasoline service stations, several checks were made. They included looking at a district internal database of permitted stationary sources, website searches for key words and reviewing Pinal County planning records, according to county records.

- Bay Area air quality worst in the world as wildfires rage in all but one county
- https://abc7news.com/weather/bay-area-air-quality-worst-in-the-world-as-fires-rage/6377953/
- By Alix Martichoux
- Updated 17 minutes ago
- Did you wake up to smoky skies this morning? ABC7 News meteorologist Mike Nicco explains where air quality is worst in the Bay Area.
- SAN FRANCISCO (KGO) -- Air quality in the Bay Area, particularly along the Peninsula, is the worst in the world Wednesday, as smoke from wildfires blows over the region.

  The PurpleAir map below shows real-time air quality readings around the Bay Area. You can see the thick band of purple AQI readings along San Mateo County, from Millbrae and San Mateo, down into western Santa Clara County.
- AQI (or Air Quality Index) readings from 101 to 150 are considered unhealthy for sensitive groups. Readings between 151 and 200 are considered unhealthy for everyone, and anything above 200 is very unhealthy or hazardous.

  ABC7 LIVE SMOKE TRACKER: Click image below to track San Francisco Bay Area air quality levels

The smoke is particularly bad in San Mateo County as the August Complex Fire continues to grow and blow off smoke toward the southeast. But the rest of the Bay Area is also starting to see unhealthy air quality levels, says ABC7 News Meteorologist Mike Nicco.

The South Bay, Santa Cruz Mountains and inland East Bay will be next to see heavy smoke, says Nicco. Further away from the Bay Area, Winters (Yolo County), Sacramento and Modesto will also see particularly smoky air.

TOTAL FIRE COVERAGE: What you need to know about fires burning in the Bay Area

There are fires burning in nearly all nine Bay Area counties. As of Wednesday morning, only San Francisco County was spared. See the latest information on all the fires here and stay with ABC7 News for updates.

Maine Lobster Industry Gets EPA Help as Collins Clings to Seat

https://news.bloomberglaw.com/environment-and-energy/lobster-fishermen-to-net-relief-as-collins-tries-to-hold-seat

Aug. 19, 2020, 2:00 PM

- Trump's EPA plans to allow more time for boat engine upgrades
- Live lobster catch imperiled by hot, cleaner-burning engines

The Trump administration's latest bid to help the Maine lobster industry -- and possibly the re-election chances of Republican Senator Susan Collins -- is giving the sector more time to start using less-polluting diesel engines.

The change is set to come in the form of an Environmental Protection Agency rule granting boat builders as much as seven extra years to keep installing older engines in high-speed commercial vessels. The White House Office of Management and Budget finished an interagency review of the measure on Aug. 13, setting up its release soon.

Susan Collins
Photographer: Al Drago/Bloomberg
The additional time is targeted to a small segment of vessels, with pilot boats and lobster fishing boats the primary beneficiaries. Lobster fishing interests and marine manufacturers pushed for the change, warning the EPA there are no certified, compliant engines that will safely fit on small lobster boats without transmitting heat that jeopardizes live catch in onboard holding tanks.

"Live lobster and heat are a lethal combination," the Maine Lobstermen's Association has warned the administration.

Maine's entire congressional delegation, including Collins, cheered on the EPA proposal last year, calling it a "commonsense solution" that "prevents lobstermen from being burdened by requirements that are impossible to meet with the currently available technology."

The EPA has estimated the industry would save at least $5.4 million by continuing to install less-expensive, older engines.

Trump Threatens New EU, China Tariffs Over Lobster in Maine Trip

It's not the first time the Trump administration has moved to boost Maine's lobster industry. In a roundtable with commercial fishermen in June, President Donald Trump threatened to slap new tariffs on China and the European Union in retaliation for duties on U.S. lobster. Trump even dubbed Peter Navarro the "lobster king" in tapping his trade adviser to pursue the issue.

Later that month, Trump signed a memo directing his agriculture secretary to consider offering financial aid to lobster fishermen who have lost revenue because of Chinese tariffs. Maine accounts for approximately 80% of the annual American lobster harvest, and Collins and other members of the state's congressional delegation have been pushing for the step for at least a year. Trump also lifted Obama-era prohibitions on commercial fishing in protected waters off New England that had been challenged by lobstermen.

Collins is considered one of the most vulnerable incumbent GOP senator in the November election, and she has pitched her ability to get things done for Maine in a divided Washington as her chief calling card. Collins has trailed Democratic nominee Sara Gideon in recent polls, including a 5-point margin among likely voters in a recent Bangor Daily News poll.

The Collins-Gideon contest could help decide control of the Senate next year. Democrats need a net gain of at least three seats to take over in the chamber if Joe Biden wins the presidency and four seats if he loses.

Collins has refused to say if she will vote for Trump this fall -- she pointedly opposed him in 2016 -- as she needs Trump's voters to have a chance of winning. Though Collins has touted her role in passing the previous stimulus package, including aid to small businesses, she has been frustrated at the failure to deliver a fresh round of help for small businesses, the Postal Service and state and local governments.

EPA Proposes To Find More Areas In Attainment With 2010 SO2 NAAQS
https://insideepa.com/daily-news/epa-proposes-find-more-areas-attainment-2010-so2-naaqs
August 19, 2020
EPA is proposing the final designations for which areas are in attainment or violating the 2010 sulfur dioxide (SO2) national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS), taking a key step toward completing the long-delayed and extensively litigated attainment designations process for the SO2 limit that it issued more than 10 years ago.

In proposed designations issued Aug. 13 by Panagiotis Tsirigotis, director of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning & Standards, EPA finds many of the final areas of the country to be designated for the 2010 NAAQS

now meet the standard. The agency will take comment on the attainment and nonattainment designations for 30 days following publication of the findings in a pending *Federal Register* notice.
The agency in June 2010 set its new, hourly SO2 standard at 75 parts per billion (ppb), but the novel hourly form of the limit required states to either develop new air monitoring sites to measure compliance, or measure compliance using computer modeling, resulting in lengthy delays in implementation.

Ultimately, EPA settled litigation brought by environmentalists by agreeing to a phased designation approach. The agency intends to finalize the last designations by a court-ordered deadline of Dec. 31.
Of the 45 proposed designations, EPA finds 34 areas in "unclassifiable/attainment" status, 10 areas in "nonattainment," and one purely "unclassifiable."

EPA in the pending *Register* notice announcing the designations defines an "unclassifiable/attainment" area as "an area that, based on available information including (but not limited to) appropriate monitoring data and/or modeling analyses, the EPA has determined meets the NAAQS and does not likely contribute to ambient air quality in a nearby area that does not meet the NAAQS."

In contrast, a purely "unclassifiable" area is one where EPA has no basis to make a decision on whether the area meets the NAAQS. Only areas designated in "nonattainment" must craft plans to cut pollution and come into compliance, however. Because attainment of the one-hour SO2 NAAQS is primarily linked to emissions from major industrial facilities, areas designated as meeting or violating the standard are typically whole or partial counties surrounding industrial plants.

NAAQS Redesignations
In a separate action, EPA is further proposing to redesignate four areas in Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Texas to "attainment" for the SO2 standard, from their prior status of "unclassifiable."
"Based on newly available data, EPA proposes that four new areas in Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Texas be redesignated as being in attainment of air quality standards for sulfur dioxide," said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler in an Aug. 14 statement. "Improved monitoring shows that during the three-year period between 2017-2019, these areas met the 2010 standards. This is great news and a result of the strong partnerships between local, state and federal authorities," he added.

The areas are: portions of Franklin and St. Charles Counties in Missouri; all of Lancaster County in Nebraska; all of Gallia County and a portion of Meigs County in Ohio; and all of Milam County in Texas.
Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) praised both utility Ameren and Missouri state air regulators for progress in achieving SO2 cuts from the firm's power plants in the state. Ameren Missouri has for years been fighting an EPA enforcement action in the courts over past new source review (NSR) air permit violations, aimed at forcing the company to install new pollution controls to reduce air pollution.

"This announcement is great news for our state, especially St. Charles and Franklin Counties," said Blunt in a statement. "Ameren and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources have worked diligently over several years to reach this point. I appreciate the Environmental Protection Agency recognizing those efforts and the success they have achieved." -- *Stuart Parker* (sparker@iwpnews.com)

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6 Amazon products that can help improve the air quality in your home
https://ca.sports.yahoo.com/news/6-amazon-products-help-improve-190034207.html

Moriba Cummings
In The KnowAug. 19, 2020, 3:00 p.m.
With stay-at-home mandates being enforced across the country, folks have been seeking new ways to make indoor living as safe and germ-free as possible. One of the most common and affordable ways of achieving this is to improve the air quality inside one's home.
According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "Clean air sustains human, animal and plant life on Earth," meaning air pollution can majorly affect the way we feel and our health. And that's especially true in closed and compact spaces.

The agency goes on to explain that air pollution, "whether indoors or outdoors," can play a part in a host of human health ailments, including heart attacks, asthma, bronchitis, hospital and emergency room visits, respiratory symptoms and more.

While some may assume that the quality of air indoors is much cleaner and healthier than air outdoors, the EPA actually says the opposite.

"Americans, on average, spend approximately 90 percent of their time indoors, where the concentration of some pollutants are often two to five times higher than typical outdoor concentrations," the agency explains. Very young adults, older adults and people with cardiovascular or respiratory problems are the most susceptible to the adverse effects of pollution.

To both improve your indoor air quality and give you peace of mind, the EPA advises that you increase the amount of fresh air brought indoors to help reduce pollutants inside. While some think that simply adding potted plants to their indoor spaces does the trick, two 2019 studies conducted by Drexel University and Newsweek prove that this is, in fact, a myth. The EPA recommends using a humidifier to adjust the humidity in your living space and, in turn, improve your indoor air quality.

"High humidity keeps the air moist and increases the likelihood of mold," the EPA's report reads. The agency recommends that indoor humidity should be kept "between 30 and 50 percent," and advises the use of "a moisture or humidity gauge, available at most hardware stores, to see if the humidity in your home is at a good level."

To increase the humidity in your home, "use a vaporizer or humidifier," and to decrease humidity, "open the windows if it is not humid outdoors." If it is too warm, the EPA suggests turning on the air conditioner or "adjust the humidity setting on the humidifier."

Below is a list of items, including air purifiers, which the EPA says "can help reduce airborne contaminants," high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter products, air quality monitors and more. It should be noted that portable air cleaners are "not enough" to protect people from COVID-19, but rather they effectively clean the indoor air, according to the EPA.

Take a look at these six Amazon products that can help improve indoor air quality.

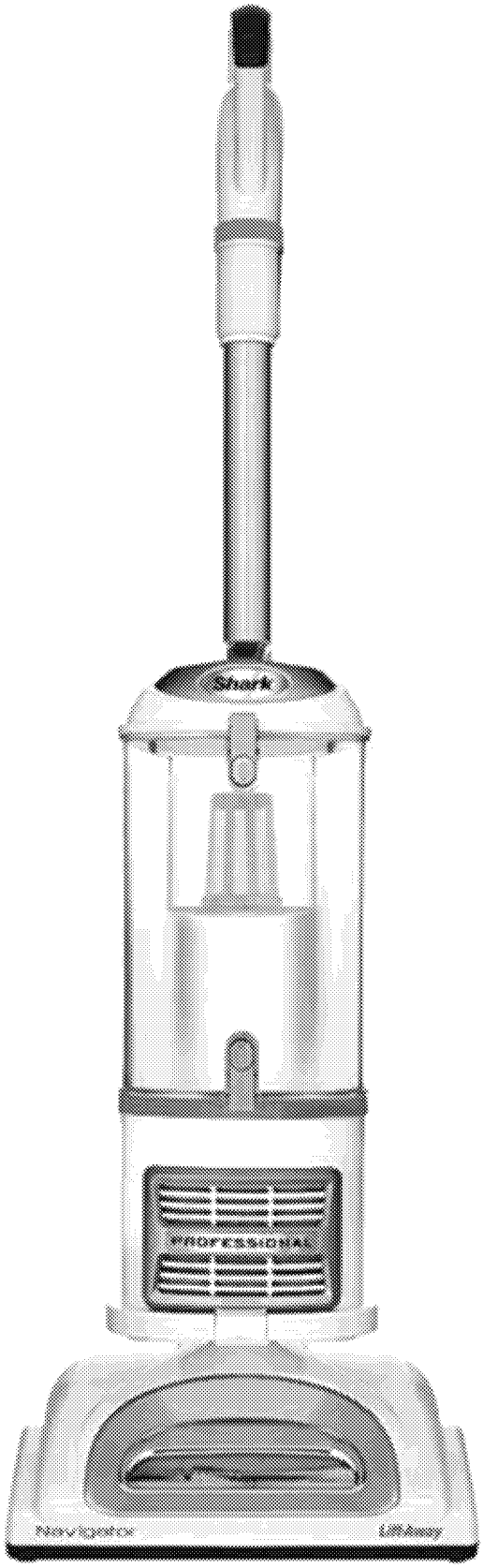
1. Air Purifiers

Shop: Levoit H13 True HEPA Air Purifier, $99.99

Credit: Amazon
More

2. Vacuum Cleaners With HEPA Filters

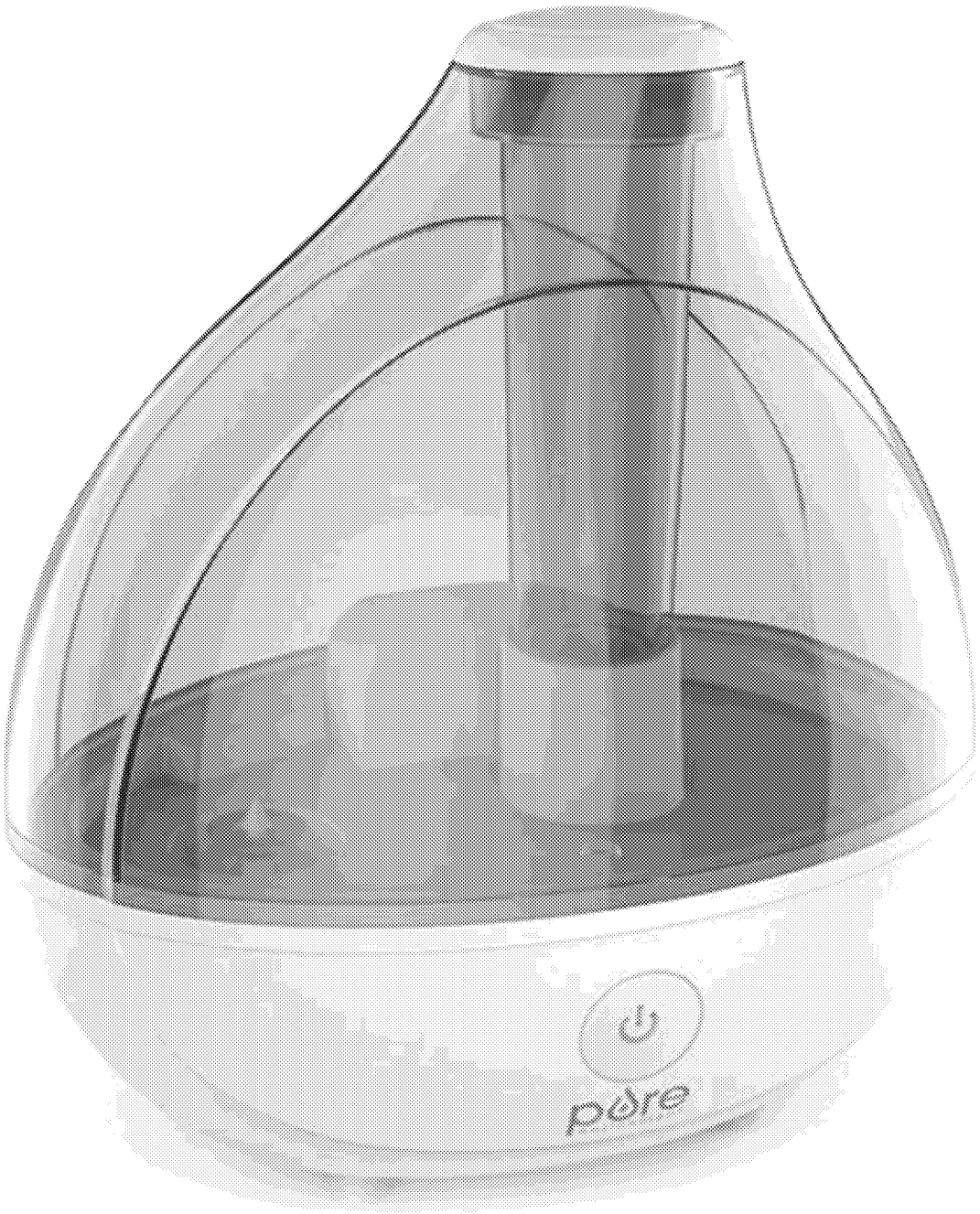
Shop: Shark Navigator Lift-Away Professional NV356E with HEPA Filter, **$147.99 (Orig. $249.99)**



Credit: Amazon
More

3. Humidifiers

Shop: Pure Enrichment MistAire Ultrasonic Cool Mist Humidifier, **$33.99 (Orig. $39.99)**



Credit: Amazon
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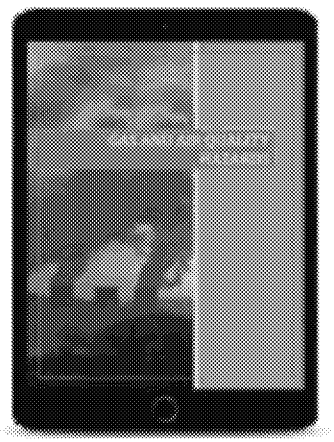
4. Air Quality Monitors

Shop: EG Air Quality Monitor, Formaldehyde Detector, Pollution Meter, Sensor and Tester, **$115.68**



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5. Humidity Gauge/Reader

Shop: Govee Indoor Temperature Humidity Sensor, **$12.99**

Credit: Amazon
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6. All-Natural Household Cleaning Products

Shop: Puracy Natural Surface Cleaner Concentrate**, $14.99**

Even with new EPA methane rules, emissions from energy sector will decline

https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/512396-even-with-new-epa-methane-rules-emissions-from-energy-sector-will

BY BERNARD L. WEINSTEIN, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 08/19/20 04:00 PM EDT 25

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After a two-year review, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has just adopted new rules that modify federal regulations for methane emissions. Although most media coverage has referred to these changes as a "rollback" of Obama-era climate policies, in fact the new rules serve mainly to eliminate duplicative — and expensive — federal regulatory oversight of the oil and gas industry.

Specifically, the rules remove methane-specific emission limits for oil and gas wells completed since 2016 while reducing federal monitoring of large pipelines, storage sites and other parts of the transmission system. Compressor stations that have been inspected quarterly for methane leaks by the EPA will be inspected semiannually.

Not surprisingly, environmental groups are predicting a climate Armageddon as a result of the EPA's actions and vowing to challenge the changes in court. Peter Zalzal, an attorney with the Environmental Defense Fund, calls the new rules "a deeply misguided action" that "is manifestly inconsistent with the agency's legal obligations, and with the science that shows methane is a dangerous pollutant."

Without question, methane is a dangerous greenhouse gas with 25 times the heat-trapping capacity of carbon dioxide. The EPA acknowledges this fact by imposing strict limits on ozone-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that mitigate most methane emissions as well. What is more, regulatory agencies in oil and gas producing states also impose strict limits on fugitive methane.

The energy industry gets a bad rap when it comes to methane. In fact, methane releases attributed to oil and gas production, processing and distribution account for less than 3 percent of overall greenhouse gas emissions in the United States and are virtually unchanged from 10 years ago, even though oil and gas production has doubled. Fugitive methane from natural gas systems is 24 percent lower today than in 2005. And a 2016 study by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) found that America's energy sector is a minor contributor to global warming — agriculture, landfills and wetlands are the main offenders.

At the same time, because methane — the principal component of natural gas — has economic value, the industry has a strong incentive to capture it. Among other initiatives, more than 80 of the nation's oil and gas producers have formed an Environmental Partnership committed to finding and fixing methane leaks that can reduce emissions by up to 60 percent. So far, participating companies have conducted more than 184,000 inspections and reported a leak rate of less than 1 percent.

Gas flaring in the U.S. has dropped 70 percent over the past year, another indication that methane emissions are being addressed by industry. This decline wasn't driven by federal or state regulations, or the COVID-19 economy, but rather by investors demanding greater capital discipline and improved environmental outcomes.

While the energy industry is making great strides in tackling methane, the farm sector — a larger source of methane than oil and gas systems — is getting a free ride. Domestic livestock, such as cattle, swine, sheep and goats, produce methane as part of their normal digestive process. Additional methane is released when manure is stored or managed in lagoons or holding tanks. According to the EPA, when livestock and manure are combined, the agricultural sector is by far the largest source of methane emissions in America, and its discharges have been rising in recent years.

Unlike the energy sector, the beef and dairy industries have been extremely resourceful at dissociating themselves from the climate change debate. For example, last year a bill was introduced in the California legislature that would have given public schools a rebate for increasing the number of plant-based meals they serve. The original bill contained language that said beef and dairy production were boosting greenhouse gases, and it also had the word "climate" in the title. The state's powerful beef and dairy industries opposed the bill, largely because of the explicit connections it made between livestock production and climate change, and this language was removed. The bill passed in the state Assembly but didn't come up for a vote in the state Senate.

In Maryland last year, the state's Green Purchasing Committee, an interagency government group charged with "promoting environmentally preferable purchasing" by state agencies, launched the Carbon-Intensive Foods Subcommittee to study which foods released higher amounts of greenhouse gases. After the group produced a list of carbon-intensive foods, which included beef and dairy, the executive vice president of the Maryland Cattlemen's Beef Association called it a "hit list" and asked the governor to disband the committee. The following month, it was dissolved.

Simple measures such as covering manure lagoons and altering cattle diets to reduce belching could help reduce methane from farming and ranching. "There's a lot policymakers and companies can do to cut [agricultural] methane emissions ... but we aren't doing them," says Rob Jackson, an environmental scientist at Stanford University and chair of the Global Carbon Project.

To date, the oil and gas industry has borne the onus of reducing methane and other greenhouse gases. It's now time for the agricultural sector, landfill operators, and other emitters of methane to step up and do their part.

Kenneth T. Labbe
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Public Affairs
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460
Office: 202-564-1486
Cell: 202-740-3770